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SIERRA COUNTY 1972

SIERRA COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The problems of evaluation are: deciding which lands are intrinsically suitable for conservation, for active and for passive recreation, which are most suitable for commerce and industry, and which for residential use.

Sierra County is, and remains, a unique resource to California and the nation. As of yet, it has not been assaulted by unplanned development. Hope for its preservation lies in the efforts and cooperation of the population, the planning department, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The basic proposition is that any place is the sum of historical, physical and biological processes, that these are dynamic, that they constitute social values, that each area has a particular suitability for certain land uses and finally, that certain areas lend themselves to multiple coexisting land uses.

Sierra County has come to be the result of constantly changing natural processes. It is important to understand and recognize this basic principle of physical and biological processes and, more important, to recognize that man is affected by them and he effects them by his intervention.

Water, land and air resources are indispensable to life and constitutes social values. The surface

waters are a resource for water supply, recreation and disposal of effluents, but their positive value is easily abused by pollution. Water management, prevention of erosion, provision of habitat for wildlife and a retreat for study and delight are several of the social values represented by forest land and then lost when a forest is allowed to succumb to advancing development. A recognition of these values, inherent in natural process, must proceed prescription for the utilization of natural resources.

This open space conservation element is a start and only a beginning in the process of study, evaluation and planning. This plan is designed to be the general outline of land use. Further study is needed to make a composite plan with a more specific suitability plan for compatable coexistence between man and his environment.

SUMMARY OF BASIC PROPOSALS

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The general long-range goals and objectives of Sierra County are to conserve and develop its great natural resources and promote the public health, safety, peace, comfort, convenience and general welfare for the present and future citizens and visitors of the county.

Future development of Sierra County must follow the goals and objectives set forth. Deviation from sound development practices which do not create an environment which is in compliance with the goals and objectives must not be tolerated.

The conservation and open space element is designed to be a general outline for future study and research. The plan is flexable and does not eliminate the need for on-site inspections of proposed developments. Abuse and loss of natural resources due to poor design practices must be curtailed. New developments must not be in conflict with county goals and objectives and should provide sound answers to ecological impact questions. This plan, by no means, should limit the potential development of Sierra County. Its purpose is to encourage and promote orderly, compatable, coexistance between man and the ecological association in which he lives.

SUMMARY OF BASIC RESEARCH

RECREATION

Sierra County's assets include many examples of natural recreation resources making it a scenic wonder of the world-truly "a county for all seasons".

An undisturbed environmental setting lies within walking distance of every household. One can enjoy the beauty of crystal clear alpine lakes and reservoirs or the quiet solitude of loneliness among the pines.

From the highest peaks to the river valleys the natural and scenic beauty has been preserved. Until this time, the preservation of Sierra County has been due to its isolation and lack of population and industrial development.

The industrial development and population increases of neighboring counties will put a great demand on Sierra County to develop its potential as a retreat from man's frustration and complex life at home. A great future for Sierra County lies in an organized development of the recreational resource. Maximum use should be made of its potential consistent with good conservation practices.

Areas most suited for recreation are determined separately for two kinds of recreational activity; passive and active. The combination of these two will produce a composit recreation development plan.

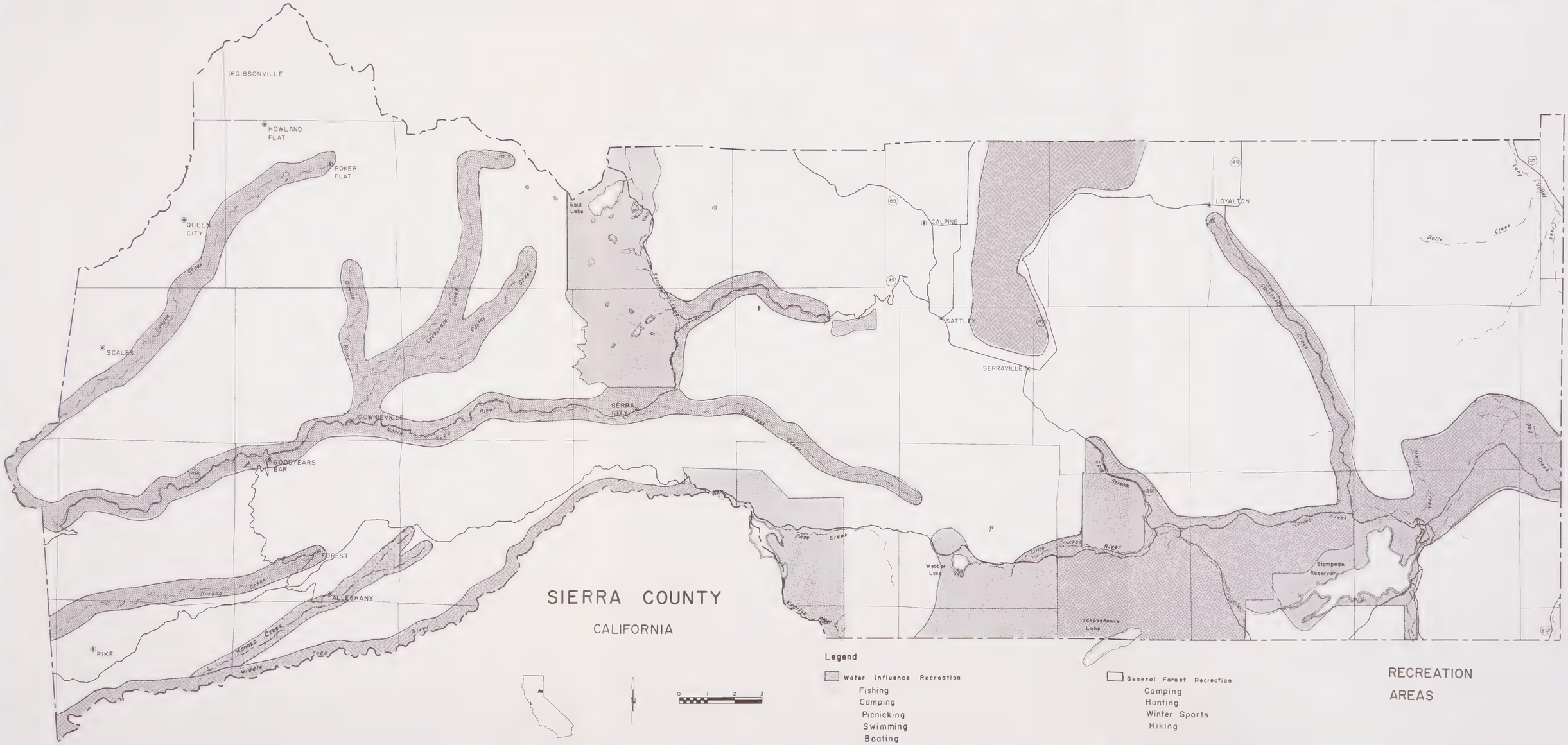
The factors selected for future and in depth study are:

Passive

1. Unique physiographic features
2. Scenic water features, streams
3. Features of historic values
4. High quality forests
5. High quality marshes
6. Scenic land features
7. Unique geologic features
8. Scarce ecological associations
9. Water associated wildlife habitats
10. Field and forest wildlife habitats

Active

1. Expanse of water for pleasure craft
2. Fresh water areas
3. Riparian lands
4. Flat land
5. Existing and potential recreation areas


GIBSONVILLE
HOWLAND FLAT
POKER FLAT
QUEEN CITY
SCALES
Gold Lake
CALPINE
SATTLEY
LOYALTON
SERRAVILLE
SERRA CITY
DOWNIEVILLE
GOODYEARS BAR
FORREST
ALLEGHANY
PIKE
Webber Lake
Independence Lake
Stampede Reservoir
North Yuba River
Middle Yuba River
Oregon Creek
Kanaka Creek
Pass Creek
Little Truckee River
Truckee River
Jackson Creek
Davies Creek
Smithneck Creek
Dog Creek
Long Valley Creek
Bells Creek
Lavezzola Creek
Poulter Creek
Downie River
Haypress Creek
Sulphur Creek
Canyon Creek
Campbell Creek
Deadfall Creek
SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
Legend
Water Influence Recreation
Fishing
Camping
Picnicking
Swimming
Boating
Hunting
General Forest Recreation
Camping
Hunting
Winter Sports
Hiking
RECREATION AREAS
0 1 2 3
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4/26/72 J.M.

GENERAL FOREST LANDS

The general forest classification is used as a catch-all category for lands which have not as yet been carefully studied and evaluated. This is not to say that these lands have been neglected any more than any other. There just has not been the need to embark on any indepth analysis. Problems were not apparent in the past and none were foreseen in the future. The general forest is one that feels the effects of many uses. Commercial forests, range land, recreation areas, wilderness environments, fish and wildlife habitats and even potential urban development are a few of the general forest activities or potential activities.

The natural vegetative cover for the most of the zone is forest. The forests exercise a major balancing effect upon the water regimen - diminishing erosion, sedimentation, flood and drought. When undisturbed, the forest is a low-maintenance, self-perpetuation landscape.

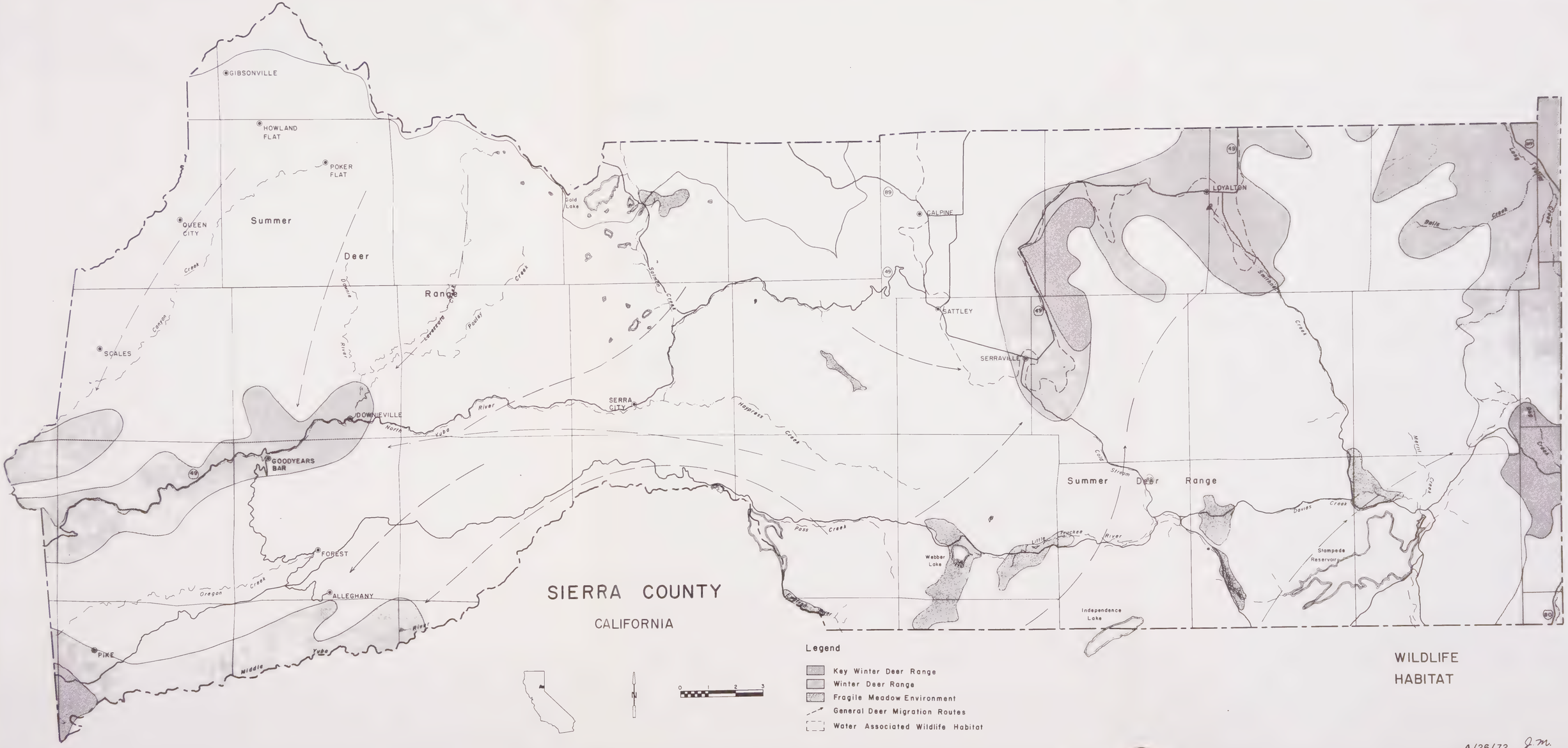
Future studies proposed for the general forest zone include geological, hydrological, soils, plant associations, wildlife, mineral resources, forest suitability, recreation suitability, forest quality and urban suitability. This type of background information is necessary to perpetrate the planning process.

WILDLIFE

Sierra County has the potential to draw a large number of people for the purpose of enjoying wildlife. It may be to sit, on a gloomy day, in a duck blind, in the Sierra Valley or to awaken on a crisp morning to hunt that trophy buck. Sierra County is available to the wildlife observer and photographer.

With marshy meadows, timbered mountains, highland plateaus and river valleys, Sierra County supports a wide variety of wildlife.

Through past years the wildlife in this area has been neglected. Deer ranges have been unnecessarily reduced and duck marshes have been drained. The county must embark on a program, in cooperation with other agencies, to encourage wise wildlife conservation practices. The inclusion of major wildlife ranges in the open space and conservation plan is a beginning to preserve and protect.


GIBSONVILLE
HOWLAND FLAT
POKER FLAT
QUEEN CITY
Summer
Deer
Range
SCALES
Canyon Creek
Oregon Creek
Goodyears Creek
Poker Flat Creek
Smithneck Creek
Cold Lake
CALPINE
SATTLEY
SERRAVILLE
LOYALTON
Smithneck Creek
Haypress Creek
Lights Creek
Butte Creek
Bear Creek
Marcus Creek
Davies Creek
Cold Stream
SERRA CITY
DOWNIEVILLE
North Yuba River
GOODYEARS BAR
FOREST
ALLEGHANY
PIKE
Middle Yuba River
Pass Creek
Webber Lake
Little Truckee River
Independence Lake
Stampede Reservoir
Summer Deer Range
SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
Legend
Key Winter Deer Range
Winter Deer Range
Fragile Meadow Environment
General Deer Migration Routes
Water Associated Wildlife Habitat
WILDLIFE HABITAT
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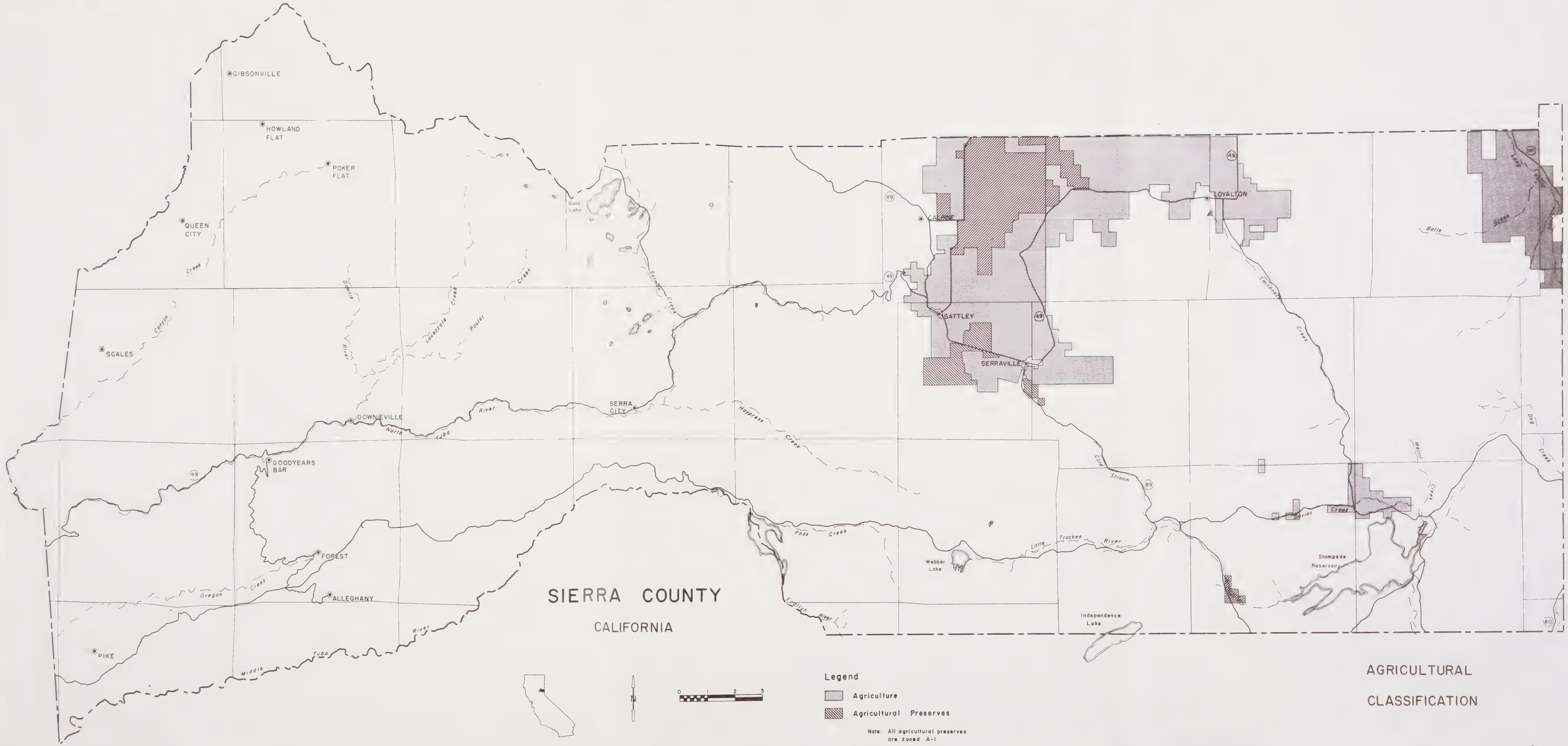
AGRICULTURE

Sierra County's only major agricultural land is the Sierra Valley. The valley, situated in the eastern portion of the county, lies at an elevation of 5,000 feet above sea level. The growing season is extremely short which restricts the valley's potential as a grain producing area. Climatic limitations have made the production of livestock the major activity. Minor agricultural activity exists in various other parts of the county. Again climatic conditions restrict the land to livestock production.

The agricultural lands contribute to the wealth of Sierra County through agricultural practices and as wildlife wintering and summering grounds.

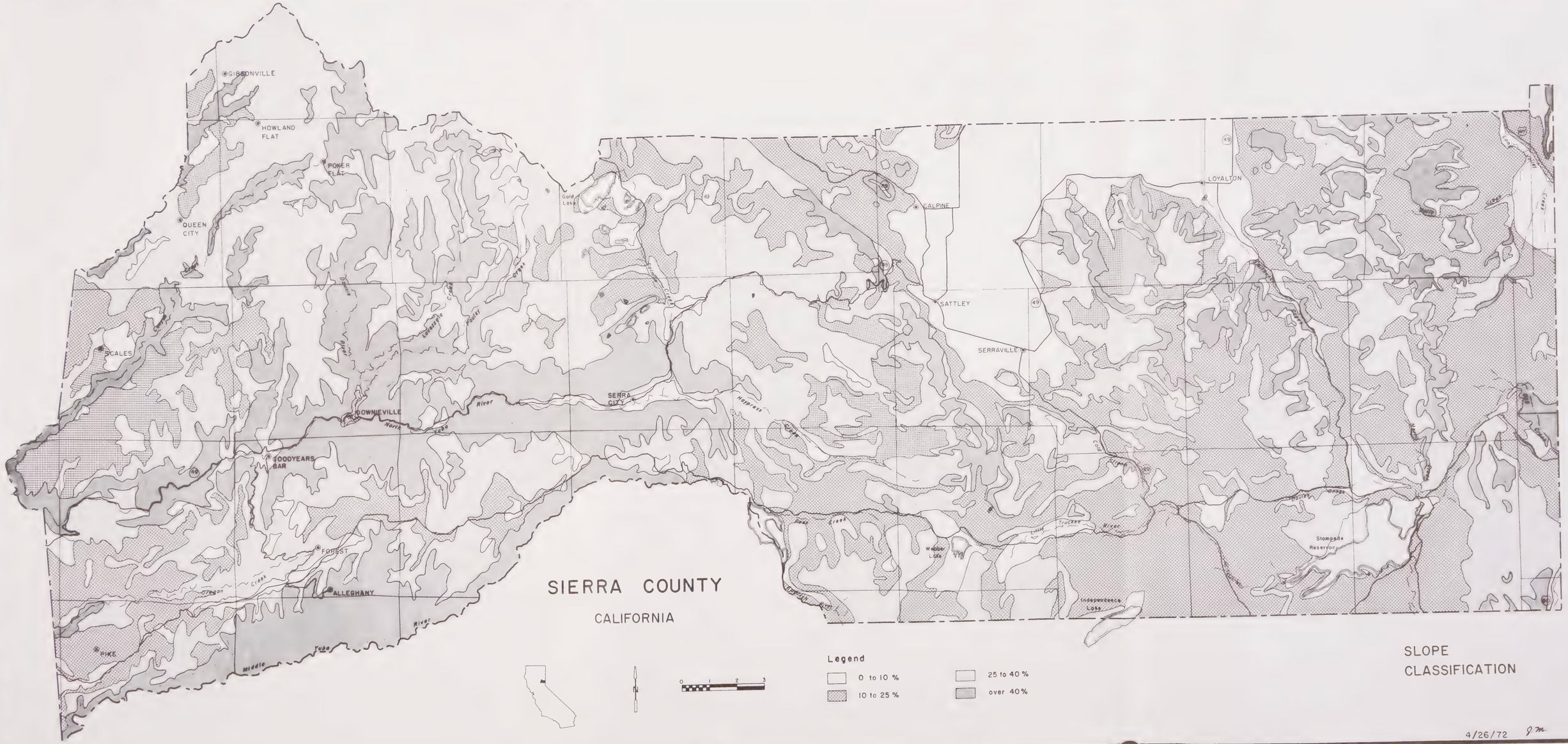
Agricultural potential should be developed to encourage the growth of the industry and to maintain and conserve the wildlife habitat.


GIBSONVILLE
HOWLAND FLAT
POKER FLAT
QUEEN CITY
SCALES
DOWNIEVILLE
GOODYEARS BAR
FORREST
ALLEGHANY
PIKE
SERRA CITY
SATTLEY
SERRAVILLE
LOYALTON
Gold Lake
Webber Lake
Independence Lake
Stampede Reservoir
North Yuba River
Middle Yuba River
Oregon Creek
Canyon Creek
Downie River
Lavezzola Creek
Poulet Creek
Sierra Creek
Haypress Creek
Pass Creek
Smithneck Creek
Bells Creek
Sierra Creek
Dog Creek
Marlin Creek
Davies Creek
Little Truckee River
Truckee River
Cold Stream
SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
Legend
Agriculture
Agricultural Preserves
Note: All agricultural preserves are zoned A-1
0 1 2 3
AGRICULTURAL
CLASSIFICATION
4/26/72 J.M.

SLOPE CLASSIFICATION

The most outstanding feature of Sierra County is its topography. The mountains are challenging, provocative and aesthetically pleasing. They are responsible for Sierra County's destiny as a recreational wonderland.

A major portion of Sierra County is composed of high peaks and deep gorges. Slopes of over 25% are not uncommon and for the most part can be classified as permanent open space. These lands are very restrictive to development and when disturbed can cause unlimited damage to the landscape. Lands in the 10 to 25% range require careful study before they are disrupted. They are classified as temporary open space. Further study of these areas is needed to determine acceptable building requirements and densities for the protection of the land and maximum utility of the user.


GIBSONVILLE
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POWER FLAT
QUEEN CITY
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DOWNIEVILLE
SERRA CITY
GOODYEARS BAR
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ALLEGHANY
BIKE
CALPINE
SATTLEY
SERRAVILLE
LOYALTON
Webber Lake
Stampede Reservoir
Independence Lake
North Yuba River
Middle Yuba River
Oregon Creek
Gold Lake
Truckee River
SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
Legend
0 to 10 %
10 to 25 %
25 to 40 %
over 40 %
SLOPE CLASSIFICATION
4/26/72

OPEN SPACE

As the state and nation become more and more urbanized, there is the threatened loss of the most attractive features of the land - the natural environment. The open space countryside is so susceptible to destruction by advancing urbanization that its protection must be a major issue in all planning activities and decisions. Protecting the natural environment is not the only use of open space. It has value for recreation, agriculture, resource protection, public safety, and the general health, welfare and well-being of the community. The fundamental goal should be provision for the maintenance of open space to provide accessibility to all who would seek it and the protection and preservation of natural resources.

Findings:

(1) A high percentage of the county is publicly owned providing open space functions.

(2) Open space will continue to be needed to relieve the monotony of urban life and for public safety functions.

(3) Recreation, watershed protection, erosion control, wildlife habitat, grazing, and agriculture are some of the major type uses accommodated by publicly owned lands.

(4) To serve the vital Open Space function, land designated as such must remain relatively free of residential development, but may be used for multiple purposes, including agriculture, open commercial recreation, extractive industry and water storage.

(5) Public lands in combination with private open type uses can provide the region with an economically attainable open space system.

Goals

(1) The conservation of unique and natural visual features.

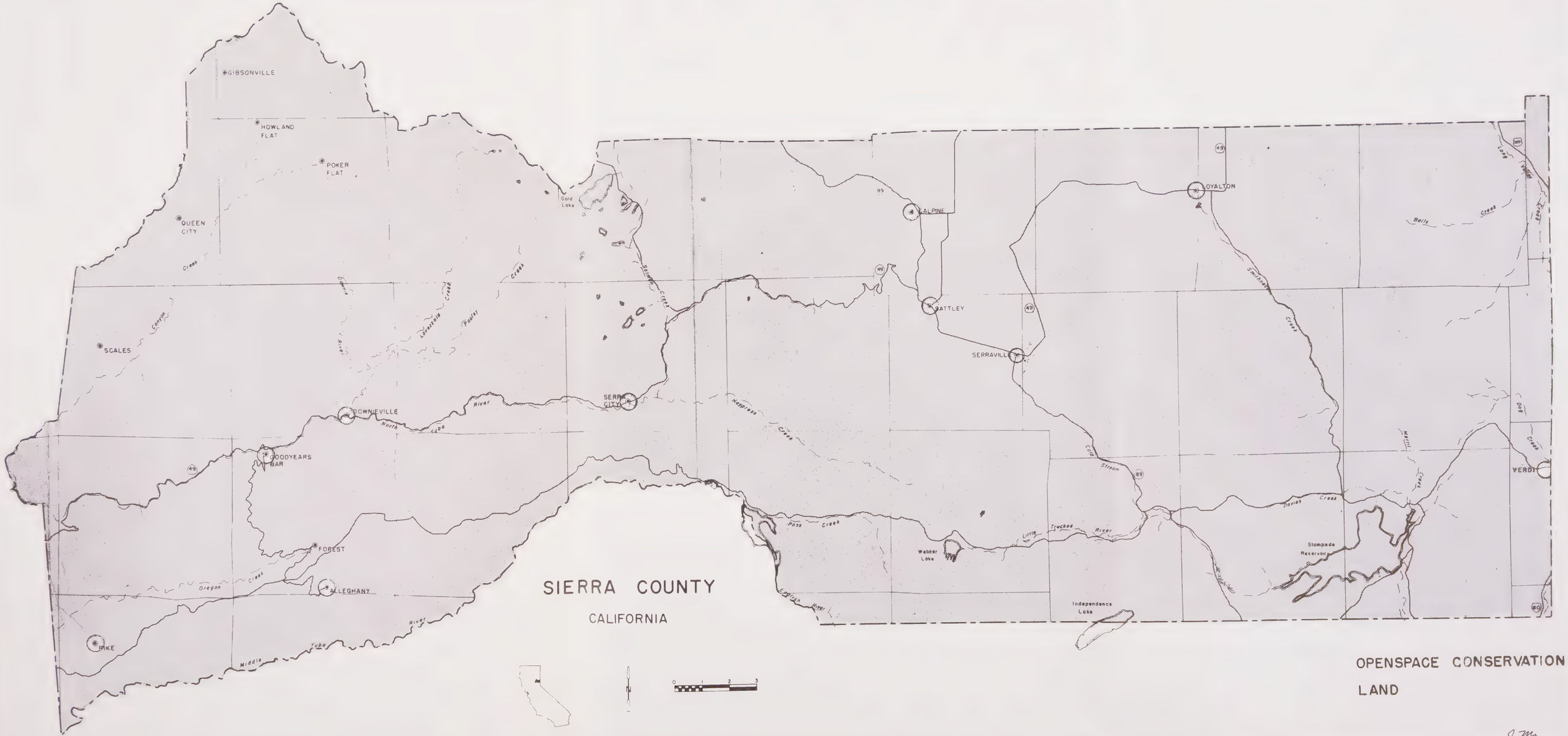
(2) Use of open space land to maintain the balance between man and wildlife.

(3) The protection of Open Space lands needed to protect water quality.

(4) The use open space to prevent development in areas on which geologic hazards exist or in areas which would prove to be detrimental to protected natural environments.

(5) The use of open space to maintain agricultural land and to avoid destruction of scenic and economic assets such as forests and meadows.

The Open Space Conservation plan is not designed to prohibit or discourage the future development of Sierra County. It will provide a basis for more intensive study and planning and the background information necessary for the development of an effective zoning ordinance.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Pauley Creek
River
Smith Creek
Haypress Creek
Cold Stream
Pass Creek
Webber Lake
Little Truckee River
Independence Lake
Stampede Reservoir
Davies Creek
Verdi
Creek
Oregon Creek
North Yuba River
Middle Yuba River
DOWNIEVILLE
GOODYEARS BAR
SERRA CITY
FOREST
ALLEGHANY
PIKE
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SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
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OPENSPACE CONSERVATION
LAND

4/26/72 JM

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

Achieving the goals of the Open Space Conservation plan will require cooperation by the citizens, developers and elected public officials. Planning for the future is a continuing process. Each element of the general plan must be studied and modified as the needs of the county change.

Implementation will be accomplished through Planning Commission action, zoning, and continued study and evaluation. The Planning Commission will find it necessary to take the initiative and responsibility in identifying the means for implementing the plan. The success and short-comings of the implementation efforts will be reported and studied for future changes. An effective zoning ordinance will supply the county with the necessary tools to insure that the policies and goals of the plan are followed. The subdivision ordinance will assure the general conformance of new developments as to densities and environmental effects. Because this element is general and only the first step, it is essential that it be maintained as a working document; and that it be kept current and up to date. An orderly procedure should be established to periodically examine, revise and readapt elements as the need arises.

APPENDIX

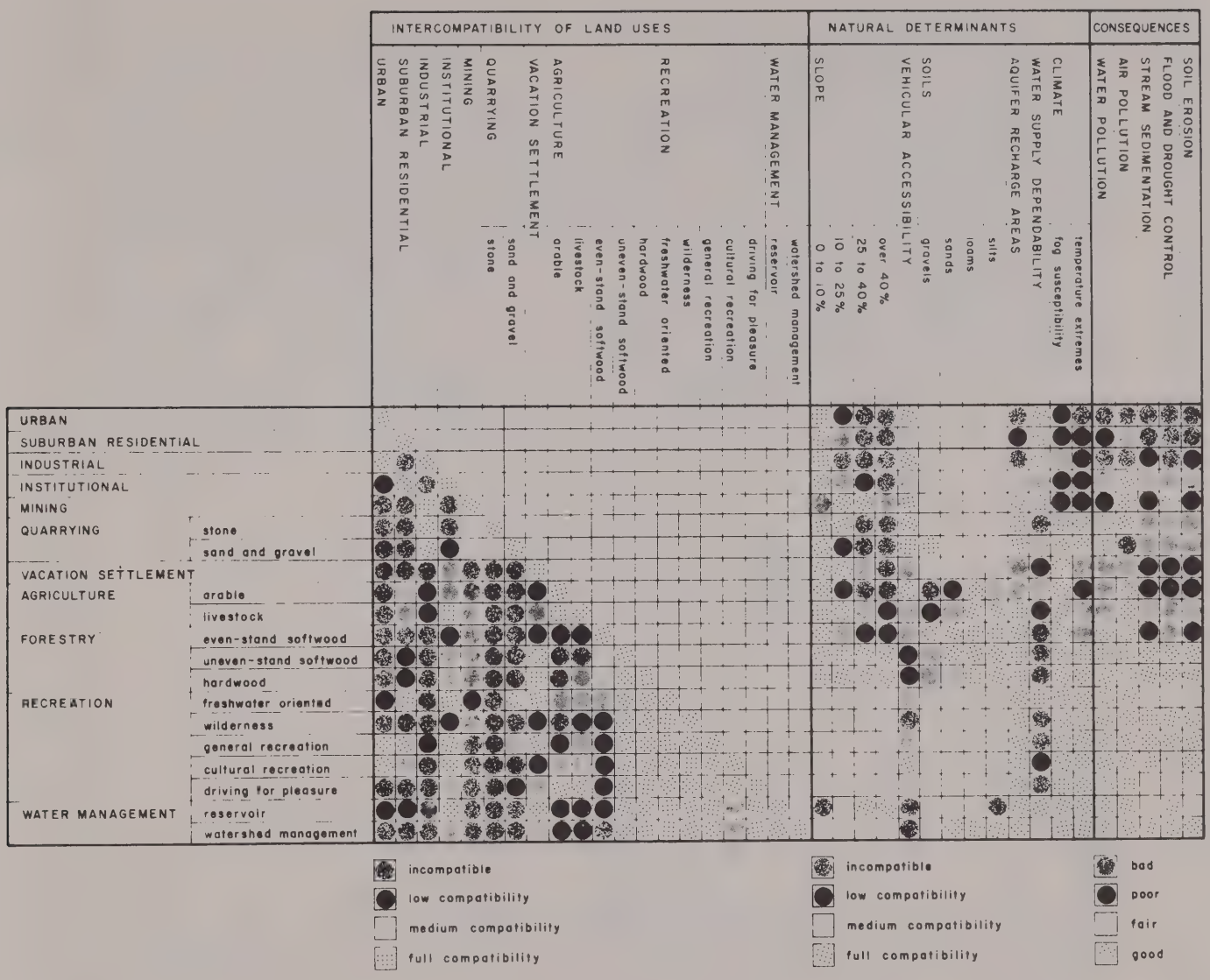
OPTIMUM MULTIPLE LAND USE MATRIX

This study of intrinsic suitabilities for urbanization, recreation, forestry and agriculture classifies land use according to intercompatibility, natural determinants and consequences.

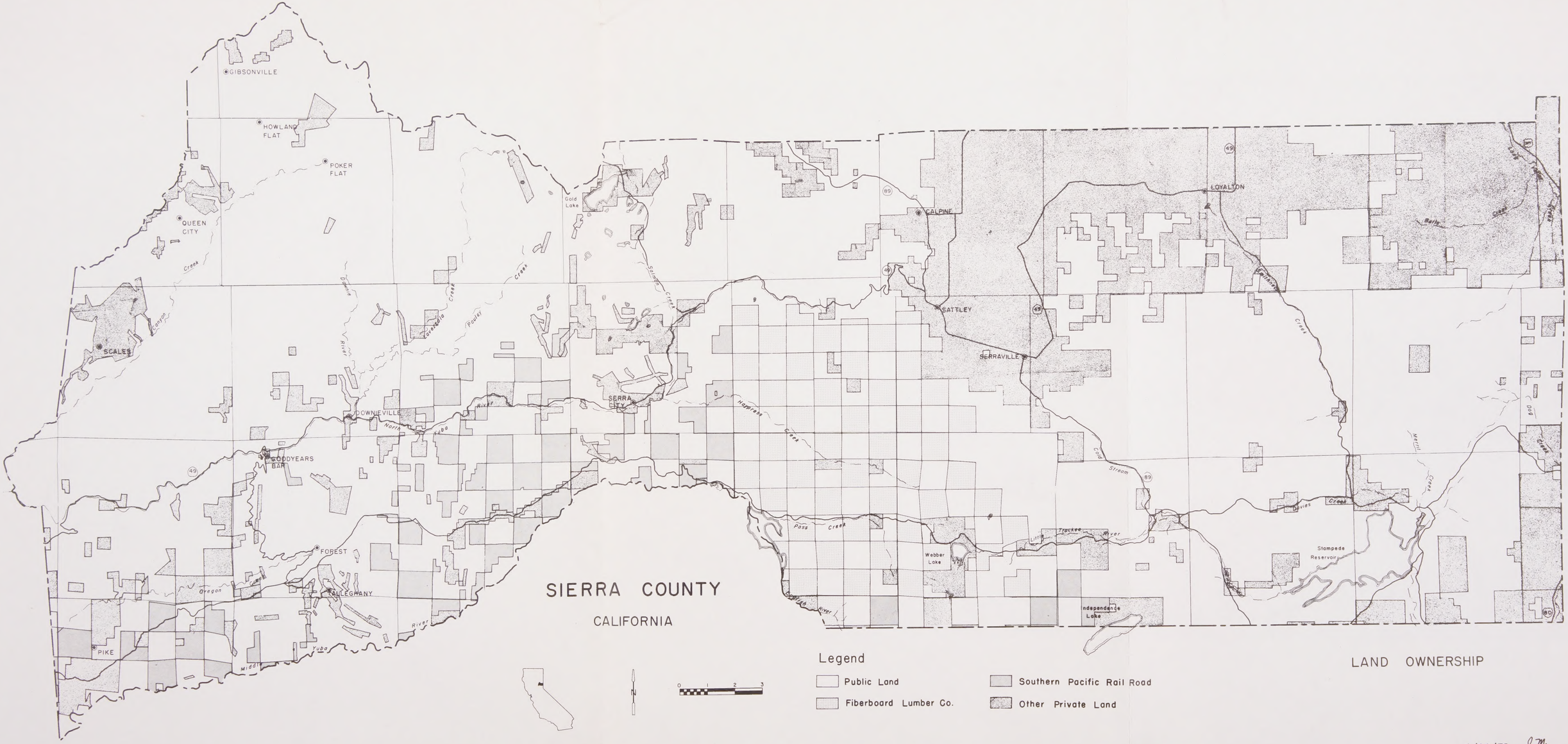
Each single optimum can be examined with its degree of compatibility with other prospective land uses. For example, an area that had been shown to have high potential for forestry would also be compatible with recreation and wildlife management. There also might be the opportunity for limited agriculture while the entire area could be managed for water objectives. In another area, agriculture may be the dominant land use, but the opportunity for some recreation and urbanization may exist.

Included with the intercompatibility matrix is another that identifies the natural resources necessary for the prospective land uses. The third matrix is devoted to the consequences of the operation of these land uses. Where there is urbanization there will be air pollution, water pollution, stream sedmentation, flood and drought control, and soil erosion. The sum of these, in principle, allows one to consider the intercompatibility of land uses, the natural determinants for their occurrence and the consequences of their operation.

This method of planning requires extensive background information and study. The development of county plans must follow the pattern of the general to the specific. Our open space and conservation element is the general. Further study into the specific is necessary to develop and maintain up to date plans which change as social values change.



DEGREE OF COMPATIBILITY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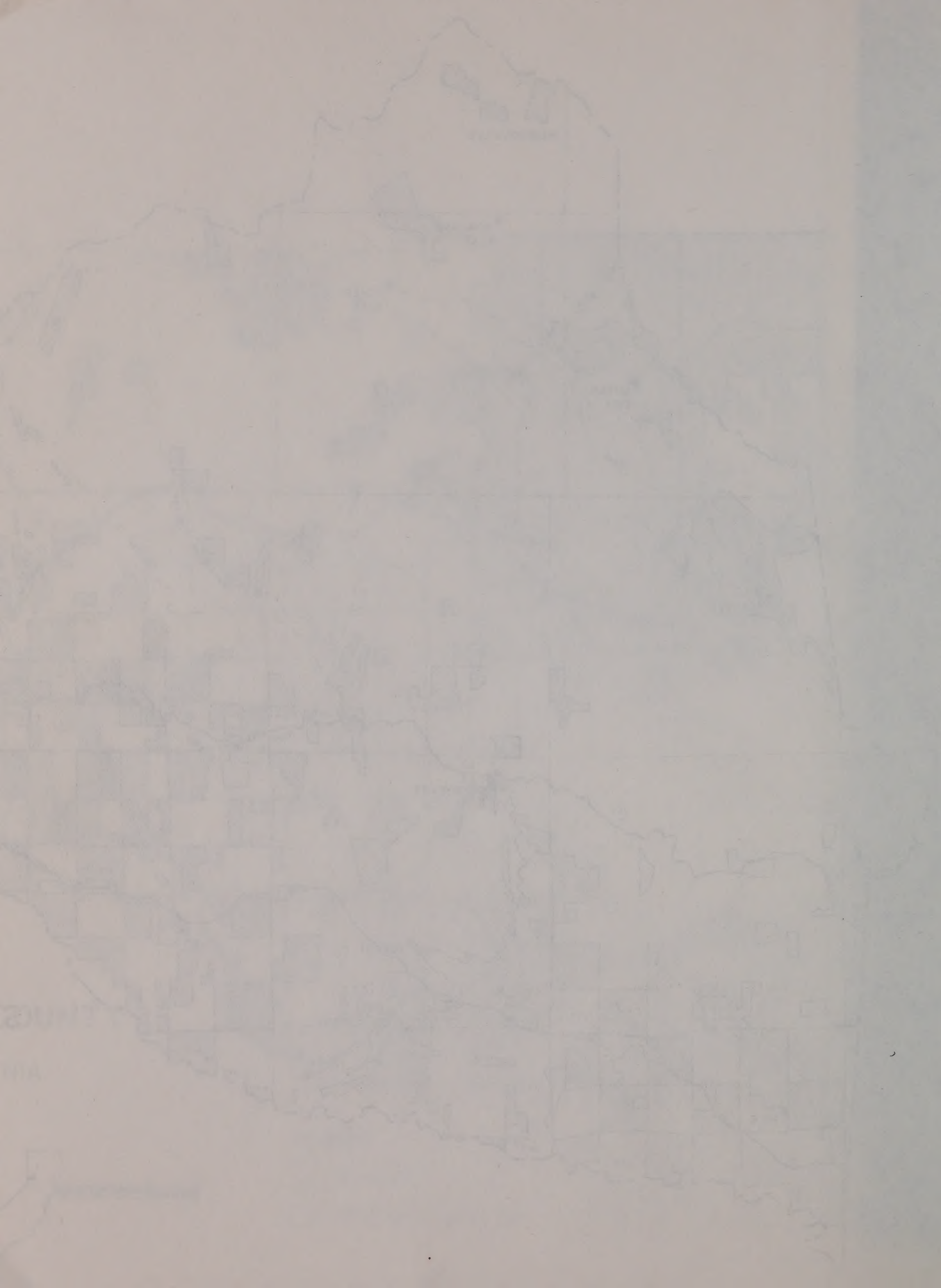
Haypress Creek
Pass Creek
Cold Stream
Little Truckee River
Truckee River
Smithneck Creek
Davies Creek
Haskell Creek
Bailey Creek
Lemon Canyon
Packer Lake
SIERRA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA
Legend
Public Land
Fiberboard Lumber Co.
Southern Pacific Rail Road
Other Private Land
0 1 2 3
N
LAND OWNERSHIP
4/26/72 JM



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